

Kern County Commission On Aging

Stephanie Lynch, Chairperson

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Commission On Aging

"Making a difference in the lives of senior citizens."

**REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING
MINUTES**

January 22, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.

Wasco Senior Center

1280 Poplar Street, Wasco, CA 93280

and via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice-Chair Snyder called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE & MOMENT OF SILENCE:

The flag salute was completed, and a moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

*(*Chairperson, **Vice Chairperson, *** Parliamentarian, ****Secretary)*

Commission Members Present:

In Person –Sonia Dhillon, Doris Duquette, ***Kris Grasty, Anabel Hernandez, Genel Hodges, Norma Jackson, Julie Juarez-Ceja, Jan Lemucchi, Ellen Linder, Devora Martinez, ****Jeremy Oliver, Linda Oswald and **Judy Snyder

Virtually – Kevin Alvey, Susan Bodnar, and *Stephanie Lynch

Excused Absences: Gloria Brown, Sherry Gomez, Barbara Goodlow, and Yolanda Prado

SECRETARY OLIVER CONFIRMED A QUORUM WAS PRESENT IN PERSON.

Honorary Commission Members Present:

Roger Oswald

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Angela Domingos, Senior Nutrition Program Coordinator

Laura M. Juarez – Office Services Coordinator

GUESTS:

In Person

Gilberto Sanchez, Guillermo Ramírez, Roberto Arreola, Nicolas Sandoval, Gamaliel Perez, Catalina Perez, Tony Bernal, Connie Bernal, Rachel Gonzalez, Julia Gonzales, and Blanca Castro

Virtually

Joseph Anderson, Lourdes Garcia, Gayla Hughes, Leslie Devitt, Peggy Langels, and Monica Fitzgerald

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. A letter was sent to Christine Peterson, Executive Editor, of Bakersfield Californian, thanking her for publishing "A Seniors Guide to Healthy Living and Independence" as part of the January/February 2024 edition of the Bakersfield Life Magazine.
2. Parliamentarian Grasty reported Chair Lynch shared with the Exec. Committee that she received an email Carla Stanley, President of the 60+ Club, asking if the COA and AASD would like to have a vendor table at their Resource Fair on May 9th from 2-4 p.m. This would be a great opportunity to get the word out to the community about the services available through AASD.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

1. Connie Bernal shared that the lunch menu is better quality, taste, and portion than it used to be.
2. Joseph Anderson shared that the Bakersfield American Indian Health Project (BAIHP) is hosting their 4th Annual Spring gathering for March 23, 2024, from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at 501 40th Street, Bakersfield, CA. He invited the Commission and anyone else who would like to attend. They just received a partnership with IKEA so will have a lot of items to give out to members of our community to help bring more awareness of what they do at BAIHP.
3. Rachel Gonzalez shared that they want more activities and exercise programs at the Wasco Senior Center. Dignity Health used to send someone out to do exercises with them, but it stopped, and they want more. Jeremy said the center has its own program outside of Aging and Adult Services, but they do try to bring additional services to the center, like the Digital Divide program. Dignity Health is a separate program. As we hear of more opportunities, we will share them with the center. AASD just installed a TV with the hope of bringing more seniors to the center. Shafter Parks operates/coordinates the activities for the Shafter Center, and it is similarly operated that Wasco would be the lead for the Wasco Center. Commissioner Juarez-Cejas said she will reach out to Chris Serna at Wasco Parks and Recreation to see about

Alzheimer's Disease Association of Kern County bringing activities and programs to the center. Parliamentarian volunteered to help write a letter to Wasco Parks and Recreation about the activities they would like at the Wasco Senior Center.

Commissioner Comments :

1. Commissioner Grasty reminded Commissioners that Ethics training is still available online at www.ca-ilg.org/ab1234compliance. If you are due to take the training, please do so ASAP and provide Laura with a copy of your certificate. If you have issues getting online, please let her know. The Digital Divide program can also help either in your home or at their office.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for October 16, 2023, Regular Commission on Aging meeting was approved as prepared.
Motion: Grasty; Second: Lemucchi; Abstained: Martinez; Opposed: None
Motion carried.
- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for November 20, 2023, Regular Commission on Aging meeting was approved with one amendment to page 2, name of senior center.
Motion: Jackson; Second: Oswald; Abstained: Snyder, Martinez, Juarez-Ceja;
Opposed: None - Motion carried.

WASCO SENIOR CENTER – Angela Domingos

Angela Domingos thanked everyone for coming to the Wasco Senior Center. This site has a smaller congregate area; however, they still provide 65 meals to seniors here daily. Their dine in numbers have steadily increased since COVID from 4-5 ppl to 17. The other 48 seniors pick up their meals to go. AASD provides a nutrition/exercise class here once a week. That program was on a hiatus due to short staffing but has come back as of last week. There is also one volunteer, Mary Pallares, who is the daughter of one of the seniors here who has been helpful; however, she is not here today. The Wasco Parks and Recreation Department provided a Christmas Drive By where they took seniors on a ride to look at houses decorated with holiday lights. The Department also organized Thanksgiving and Christmas luncheons for the seniors. The City of Wasco provided transportation to and from the Kern County Fair in September. The City provides this service every year. When seniors are not participating in the above activities, they plan monthly potlucks and contribute towards a birthday cake to celebrate monthly birthdays. They also spend their time playing BINGO & Loteria where they sometimes raffle off the framed puzzles they have completed. They also enjoy playing dominos, and watching movies on the new TV that the County has provided.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Karen McKenzie

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Jose Lopez reported they are always working hard to make sure that all the veterans in Kern County are being assisted with whatever need they may have. If you know of any veterans, they can contact Veterans Services to find out if they're eligible for veterans' benefits. Jose

left flyers about veterans' services at the center.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Public Health Nurse

Not in attendance.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garica

Lourdes Garcia attended virtually and reported Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services has a new director, Alison Burrowes, who will be sharing her vision and goals for our department in an upcoming internal meeting. We look forward to positive changes and continuing our work with the community. We continue to get involved in outreach events in the community to provide education on mental health and encourage those in need to seek services. BHRs continues to serve our elderly here through our VSOP and WISE programs. We do have an unforeseen future for our VSOP program, as we await the results of the March voting ballots regarding the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). This is known as Proposition 1, and it includes the one percent tax on those that make over a million dollars and helps fund our prevention and early intervention programs such as VSOP. If this measure does not pass, we will lose this funding, therefore losing these much-needed prevention services. I will try and keep you updated as March nears. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Gayla Hughes shared information about the Outreach letter that was sent out by DHS this month informing Medi-Cal clients that they may qualify for a program that will cover some of their Medicare costs for those who pay for Medicare Part A. This program may pay for Medicare Part A premium, Medicare Part B premium, and Medicare deductibles, copayments, and coinsurance. Interested persons can apply online at: <https://benefitscal.com/> or can call the office. They can also fill out the application form and mail it to their local county office. The application can be found here: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/MSPCal>. For individuals eligible for Medicare Part A but cannot afford it, they can call the Social Security Administration between January 1 through March 31 and ask for Conditional Medicare Part A. They can apply for the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program after they are approved for Part A. For those who are not eligible for the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program can contact their county worker to inquire about Medicare Savings Programs that may help pay for their Part B. premium. Some clients Medi-Cal clients are being enrolled into a new provider because they are no longer contracted with Health Net so those that did not complete the new enrollment packet and return it, were auto assigned to a new provider. As of January 1, 2024, there is no longer restricted Medi-Cal based on citizenship status. If you are income eligible you will be eligible for full scope Medi-Cal.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Peggy Langels reported Job Squad Live is held on the America's Job Center Facebook page every Thursdays at 9:00am. Jobs are also posted on the Facebook page after Job Squad. SER JOBS has an office in the America's Job Cener. To be eligible you must be 55 and older, unemployed, and within 125% of the poverty level. Phone number is (661) 635-2792. Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program for veterans that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Expungement Process. 1st Friday of the month virtual, 3rd Friday of the month in-person. 10:30am – 11:30am. Niagara Bottling, LLC in Delano Recruitment. January

23rd, 1129 Olive Dr., Suite H. Construction and Industrial Job Fair, January 23rd, American Legion – Post 26 2020 H St. Metrix Learning – Free to everyone. 2024 Labor Law Update virtual training, Wednesday, 1/24/24 12:00pm – 1:00pm. Flyers were provided for the training and job recruitments.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Not in attendance.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Hermandeep Dhawali

Not in attendance.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Leslie Devitt

Leslie Devitt attended virtually and reported on the 2023 Elder Trend Stats. There was a total of 44 stolen vehicles. The most popular were the 1998-2005 Chevy trucks and 2010-2020 KIA and Hyundai. Most seniors tend to have only liability coverage on the older model vehicles so they likely would only be able to get restitution if the suspect is caught and pays restitution. The reason older KIA and Hyundai vehicles are popular for theft is because they have a key ignition that can easily be started using an iPhone charger. There were 150 family violence crimes, usually mother/son or grandmother/grandson. There were 23 workplace violence, with 2-3 being the same victim but different offenders. There was a total of 4 homicides, which are usually committed by a family member or acquaintance. A story was shared by a guest about their recent experience with a break-in and then returned to steal a vehicle. Leslee reminded everyone to please not confront suspects committing crimes. Don't become a victim yourself. Continue to call law enforcement.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

House passed another stop-gap spending bill or continuing resolution that will keep funding in place until March 1st for portions of the government such as veterans affairs, transportation, housing and energy department and the rest of the government would be funded until March 8, 2024.

STATE

The Governor released his January Budget. The state is trying to fill the \$37.9 billion General Fund shortfall over a three-year period ending in 2024-2025. The deficit is significantly based on two factors, one being a substantial decline in stock market in 2022 around capital gains, and the other being a delay in income tax collections. The Governor's office projects a \$37.9 billion dollar deficit while the Legislative Analyst Office is projecting a \$68 billion dollar deficit. Currently there are no projected impacts to the majority of AASD programs with the exception being the APS Home Safe Program which will see a deferral of funding.

Measures to address the shortfall include:

- \$13.7 Billion spending from the reserves.
- \$8.5 Billion in spending reductions the largest coming from the climate investments and unspent housing programs, but also including \$275 million in cuts to CALWORKS administration and services.
- \$5.7 Billion in new revenues and internal special funds borrowing including revenues from Managed Care Organizations tax.
- \$7.2 Billion in funding deferrals and delays
- \$3.4 Billion in shifts of expenditures from the General Fund to other funds.

DEPARTMENT

We continue to promote our Digital Divide program and want to encourage referrals to our department to assist seniors with understanding and navigating their digital devices. The program can meet with individuals in their homes and can assist them with obtaining digital devices to improve their access to services.

The IHSS program continues to seek additional staff to keep up with the rising caseloads and referral growth and negotiations continue with the United Domestic Workers regarding IHSS provider wages.

The APS program continues to see growth in referrals. The conservator program is likely to see some impact from the Care Court process being initiated in the coming months. SB 43, which is the expansion of the Grave Disability definition was deferred by the Board of Supervisors until 2026 with efforts to initiate earlier depending on infrastructure that will allow for safe enactment of expanded definitions.

The Department looks forward to a new year of challenges and growth.

OPERATING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BYLAWS COMMITTEE – S. Bodnar; K. Grasty

No report.

CALIFORNIA SENIOR LEGISLATURE (CSL) – J. Lemucchi; J. Snyder

Vice-Chair Snyder reported that CSL met at the end of October and went through the process to develop and agree on its 10 top priorities to bring forward to all the Legislators staff. The 40 Senior Senators and 80 Senior Assemblymembers choose to be either on Legislative committees or other committees. They review the proposals with Legislative staff who will take them back to their meetings with Elected Officials. Some of the proposals they're working on hospital discharges are being standardized throughout the state. This proposal was presented last year, and it went a distance and then was kind of tabled, so we were asked to bring it back this year and so that is what we're doing. They have other proposals that are associated with standardizing confidential marriage, grandparents and caregiver's support, hospice standards, and others. The committee she is serving on required that they have accomplish having 12 Zoom meetings in less than 3 weeks. They've accomplished 9 of those so far so they have been very busy. They will keep the Commission updated as they learn more.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Gomez; K. Grasty; L. Oswald

Commissioner Oswald reported the following:

- Recently Reappointed:
Barbara Goodlow – reappointed by Bakersfield Senior Center. Her new term expires 12/08/2025.
- New Appointments:
None.
- Resignations:
None.
- Expired Terms:
Ellen Linder – term expired 01/10/2024. A letter of reappointment was sent to North of the River Recreation and Park District.
- Appointments Soon to Expire:
None.
- Vacancies:
 1. District 1 – for term expiring 06/17/2024 (replacing Debra Teofilo).
 2. Around the Clock Care, for term expiring 08/07/2025 (replacing Sandy Morris).
- New Applications Received:
None.

This concludes the Commissioner Appointment Report for January 2024.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – G. Hodges; S. Lynch; E. Linder

Chair Lynch reported they recognized 241 employees of AASD in December, and they're looking forward to the next event.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – B. Goodlow; K. Grasty; J. Lemucchi; S. Lynch; L. Oswald; Y. Prado; J. Snyder

Vice-Chair Snyder reported the Exec. Committee met January 10, 2024, and the results of the meeting were already discussed or will be discussed here today. She also shared that the Commission usually goes dark in December, but they remained very busy. They were asked by AASD to write articles for the Bakersfield Californian's Bakersfield Life magazine. These articles were due the last Saturday in December. There were a good number of articles written by Commission and AASD staff.

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) ADVISORY – Vacant

Chair Lynch reported she received and accepted the resignation letter from Vice-Chair Snyder. A new recommendation for the appointment of Commissioner Hernandez was sent to AASD Director, who submitted the recommendation to the Board of Supervisors for their

consideration. Laura shared that this matter was placed on the January 23rd agenda for the Board of Supervisors meeting to appoint Commissioner Hernandez to represent the COA on the IHSS Advisory Committee meeting. Commissioner Hernandez reported she attended the meeting on January 18th, but they did not have a quorum to approve action items and that is an ongoing problem right now. They need to get more members. The committee is working on amending the IHSS Advisory Committee Bylaws and hoping to work with the Board of Supervisors to allow for more members of the committee to be providers with a few consumers. It is difficult to get consumers to serve on the committee. They also discussed a new law that went into effect about parents being able to become providers for their children. For those who previously were denied are encouraged to reapply. The Department is also reaching out to those who were previously denied.

LONG-TERM CARE – A. Hernandez; S. Bodnar; D. Duquette; D. Martinez; N. Jackson

Commissioner Martinez reported the Long-Term Care Ombudsman now has an Executive Assistant. A private funder that saw the need for her to get help. She is working on a program called "Empowerment" which is a project for families interested in obtaining knowledge in the Long-Term Care world. Again, this is made possible by a private funder. Commissioner Bodnar shared the committee had a meeting via Zoom last week and went over Health Advance Directives. Commissioner Hernandez shared that they also discussed the facilities and the importance of planning ahead.

MARKETING & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE – Y. Prado; D. Duquette; G. Hodges; S. Lynch; J. Snyder

Vice-Chair Snyder shared that she and Commissioner Prado conducted orientation on November 29th and went over the orientation process with Commissioner Hodges and Commission Dhillon. They are now up to date on orientations with new Commissioners. Chair Lynch added that Parliamentarian Grasty is working on creating a Standing Rule on the flow of a standardized orientation for new Commissioners. She is also going through the orientation binder to see what needs to be in the binder and what can be posted on the COA website.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – K. Alvey; G. Brown; B. Goodlow; N. Jackson

No report.

SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – B. Goodlow; A. Hernandez; G. Hodges

No report.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

No report.

THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING COUNSEL OF CALIFORNIA (TACC) – S. Gomez; S. Dhillon

Commissioner Dhillon reported that she received the 2024 meeting schedule and has signed up to attend the meetings. She added that TACC will cover the cost for the primary representative to attend the C4A Annual Conference, but she would like to attend and needs to find out about the fees associated with the alternate attending.

TRANSPORTATION – J. Juarez-Ceja; J. Lemucchi

No report.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown; E. Linder; L. Oswald

Vice-Chair Snyder thanked all guests who participated and stayed for today's meeting. There was only one senior nutrition volunteer in Wasco. They will continue to recognize volunteers as they meet at the different senior centers throughout the County.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- Parliamentarian Grasty shared that the Centenarian Recognition Program continues to receive requests. The Commission partnered with Channel 17 to recognize Centenarians on their morning sunrise show between 6:30 a.m. to 7 a.m. So far, we have recognized 11 seniors, with 6 of them over 100 years! We have one coming up in February 2024 and we are looking for more Centenarians to recognize.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION –

- Commissioner Juarez-Ceja addressed the guests and let them know that the Commission heard their concerns, and it did not fall on deaf ears. She offered names and phone numbers to contact their local City officials.
- Guest, Rachel Gonzalez thanked the Commission for allowing them to vent and address their concerns.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, February 7, 2024 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, February 26, 2024 (4th Monday due to holiday) 1:00 p.m. Lamont Senior Center 10300 San Diego St., Lamont, CA 93241 (COA Ex-Officio Members and the public may attend in person or via Zoom. Please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052 for the link to join)

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 2:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj